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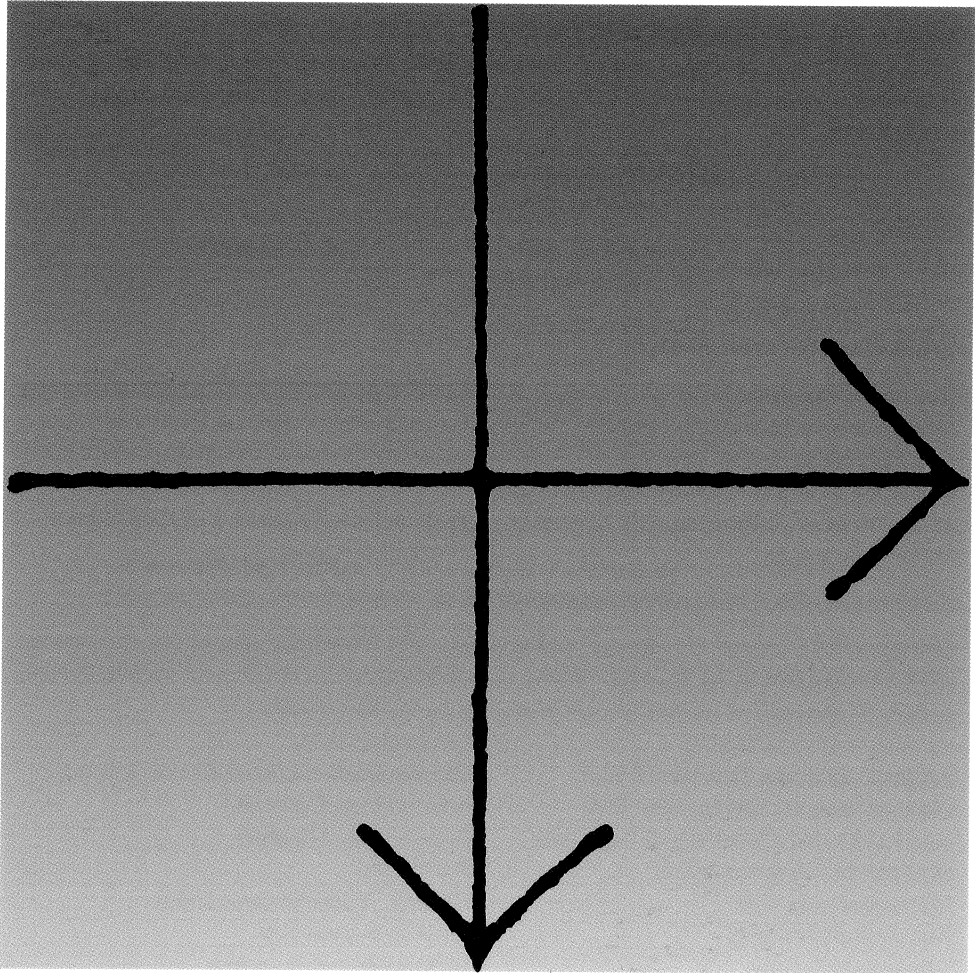
The Role of Semantic, Pragmatic, and Discourse Factors in the Development of Case. Edited by Jóhanna Barðdal & Shobhana L. Chelliah. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 2009. Pp. xx, 432. (*Studies in Language Companion Series*, 108).

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The contents of this volume are split almost evenly between papers presented at a workshop organized at the 17th International Conference on Historical Linguistics (ICHL 17) held 31 July-5 August, 2005 in Madison, Wisconsin (seven contributions), and articles written especially for the volume (eight contributions). The 15 papers cover a wide range of topics in the diachrony of case, thus belonging to a branch of linguistics which has shown rapid development in the last decade — the diachronic typology of linguistic categories. Altogether, the authors take on this ambitious question: how and why do case systems change? Except for five articles dealing with evidence from non-Indo-European languages (Japanese, Tibeto-Burman and Pama-Nyungan), the bulk of the data under study are brought from 'classical' Indo-European languages, mostly from Western branches: Greek, Germanic, Romance, Baltic, Slavic, and Vedic.

The volume opens with the short editorial "Introduction", which conveniently surveys the main topics addressed in the book and summarizes the content of the papers.

Part 1, "Semantically and aspectually motivated synchronic case variation", includes two papers. Tonya Kim Dewey and Yasmin Syed ("Case variation in Gothic absolute constructions") address an important and much debated issue: which factors determine the choice of the case marking (nominative/dative/genitive/accusative) in Gothic absolute constructions. They argue that, contrary to the view advocated by many, the Gothic absolute construction was not a borrowing from Greek but a construction native to Gothic. The authors convincingly demonstrate that the choice of case forms was not random but motivated by a variety of parameters — foremost, by the semantic features of the construction. Thus, while the dative is the default (unmarked) choice, attested in the majority of the absolute constructions, the accusative may be triggered by the aspectual (durative) semantics of the participle, while the nominative appears in the case of coordinate relationship between the main clause and the absolute construction (probably, a Gothic innovation).

Eystein Dahl, "Some semantic and pragmatic aspects of object alternation in Early Vedic", offers a number of interesting observations on the parameters determining object case variation with some semantic classes of verbs in the language of the oldest Vedic text, the Ṛgveda (RV). These classes include verbs of consumption/ingestion, perception/comprehension, desire (all constructed with the accusative or genitive), enjoyment (instrumental/locative), possession and some other minor classes.[1] The author identifies the main factors which determine the choice of the case in terms of the definiteness of the object noun (the parameter which is, crosslinguistically, commonly regarded as responsible for the accusative/non-accusative case variation with objects, cf. the handbook example *piba sómam* (acc.) "drink (the) soma" ~ *piba sómasya* (gen.) "drink (some/ of) soma", where case marking is used "to distinguish situations where the object argument is fully consumed and situations where only a part of the object argument is consumed", p. 40) and telicity of the verb. It is important to note, however, that, for some types of variation, the parameter of telicity may be of secondary importance, being conditioned by some (more basic) features. Thus, as noted by the author himself (pp. 46–48), in the case of verbs which allow for the reciprocal interpretation, such as *yudh* "fight" or *sac* "associate", the use of the instrumental in constructions of the type RV 4.18.2d *yúdhyai t$_u$vena sáṃ t$_u$vena pṛchai* "I (= Indra) shall fight against one, negotiate with another" can readily be explained as case marking typical for reciprocal constructions (see Kulikov 2007: 715 for details). Moreover, as I have argued elsewhere (Kulikov 2001: 449–450), the accusative case marking with the verb *yudh* may be of secondary character, emerging in analogy with the compounds with *abhí*, where the accusative must be due to the preverb, as, for instance, in RV 6.31.3 *tvám … abhí śúṣṇam indra … yudhya kúyavam* "fight you, O Indra, against Śuṣṇa, against Kuyava …".[2]

Part 2, "Discourse motivated subject marking", also consists of two papers. Felicity Meakins ("The case of the shifty ergative marker: A pragmatic shift in the ergative marker of one Australian mixed language") describes the use of ergative marker in Gurindji Kriol (originating in a Gurindji ergative morpheme). The

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1. These classes were first correctly identified and characterized, on the basis of similarity in their syntactic behavior, by Jamison (1983) as groups of 'intransitive/transitive' (I/T) verbs. Unfortunately, this important study is not mentioned in Dahl's paper.

2. Note also that, for some instances of accusative case marking, the telic interpretation is not indisputable; thus, RV 4.30.5ab *yátra devā́m̐ ṛghāyató ' víśvām̐ áyudhya éka ít* should be rendered as 'where you (sc. Indra) alone **fought** / **was fighting** against all impetuous gods …', rather than 'where you alone **defeated** all the raging gods…' (as Dahl translates it, p. 48). Note that the standard Geldner's (1951: I, 458) translation of this passage ('Wo du die drohenden Götter alle ganz allein bekämpftest …') does not imply the telic reading: it only refers to the process of fighting, without specifying its outcome.

author concludes that, in spite of the formal identity of the ergative marker in Gur-indji Kriol (suffix -*ngku* with substantives) with the source morpheme in Gurindji, its function is quite different from the original. It is used as a marker of discourse prominence, retaining the ergative function (that is, distinguishing subject from object in transitive clauses) only marginally. This results in a phenomenon called 'optional ergativity'.

Ulrich Detges ("How useful is case morphology? The loss of the Old French two-case system within a theory of Preferred Argument structure") addresses the much debated issue of the restructuring of the case system in the history of French, which had resulted in the loss of case distinctions by the Middle French period. He approaches this issue in the framework of Preferred Argument Structure. Arguing, quite convincingly, against a variety of approaches, such as the explanation of the loss of case distinction in terms of 'phonological erosion' (loss of the final -*s*), the emergence of rigid word order, a Natural Morphology approach, or Markedness Theory, he arrives at a somewhat paradoxical conclusion that "inflectional case marking on full nouns is unnecessary for successful communications" (p. 116) as long as pronouns can be used to distinguish subjects from non-subjects. The author explains the collapse of the Old French case system by generalization of the more frequent oblique form. This explanation, however convincing it might appear, may be overly simple. Although the general tendency to preserve case distinction for determiners and pronouns, in accordance with the hierarchy of topicality, is correctly predicted by Preferred Argument Structure, other factors, such as the tendency to avoid 'conceptually too complicated' systems (van Reenen & Schøsler 2000) should not be disregarded either.

Part 3, "Reduction or expansion of case marker distribution", is the largest, with five papers which focus on situations when two or more cases are in competition and on the mechanisms of distributional changes within the system, when the functional domain of one case is usurped by another. Jóhanna Barðdal's paper "The development of case in Germanic" argues against a number of traditional explanations of the loss of morphological case in several Germanic languages (foremost in English, Swedish, German and Icelandic), such as phonological erosion or changes in word order (from free to fixed). Instead, she proposes a different explanation in the framework of the usage-based construction grammar. The central point of Barðdal's explanation is the rich polysemy of case constructions in Old Germanic, which, logically, should result either in the loss of morphological case (the scenario followed by English, Swedish, and Dutch) or in the disappearance of low frequency constructions ousted by (partly) synonymous high frequency types (German and Icelandic). The author also draws attention to the correlation between the loss of morphological case and extensive lexical borrowings due to language contact (as in English or Swedish), which could trigger the former

scenario: "the faster the vocabulary is renewed, the sooner the high type frequency constructions increase in type frequency, and the sooner the low-frequency constructions decrease in their type frequency" (p. 155). Although it is unclear how straightforward the correlation between changes in the lexicon, on the one hand, and in the morphological (grammatical) system, on the other, might be, there must undoubtedly be a connection between koinéization, due to intensive language contacts, and the reduction of the grammatical system — observed by several scholars for mainland Scandinavian (e.g., Trudgill 1986, Trask / McColl Millar 2007: 398ff.).

A usage-based construction grammar approach is also adopted in the two next papers, concentrating on evidence from Slavic and Baltic. Hanne Martine Eckhoff ("A usage-based approach to change: Old Russian possessive constructions") explains the decline of possessive adjective constructions of the type *korabl' Glebov* [possessive adjective] "Gleb's boat", ousted by genitive constructions (*korabl' Gleb-a* [genitive]) in terms of the 'deschematisation' of the former type (which results in a decrease in its productivity), followed by the 'schematisation' of the latter. Sturla Berg-Olsen ("Lacking in Latvian: Case variation from a cognitive and constructional perspective") focuses on constructions used with the Latvian verb *(pie)trūkt* "lack, miss". Comparing two competing syntactic patterns attested with this verb with the nominative and with the genitive of the lacking entity ('lackee'), the author concludes that the latter type, prescribed by normative grammar and dominating in formal style (in written texts), has a lesser degree of entrenchment and therefore less chance to survive, ousted by the former (nominative) construction, common in the colloquial language. Turning to historical matters, Berg-Olsen rightly notices that the nominative constructions must be an innovation (which is corroborated, in particular, by the predominance of the genitive pattern in the closely related, but more conservative, Lithuanian), but her evaluation of the linguistic situation in the corresponding geographic area is not free from inaccuracies. It is not quite correct to ascribe the lesser conservatism of Latvian to Balto-Finnic influence and/or substrate: Lithuanian undoubtedly also owes some of its features to Finnic influence (suffice it to mention the emergence of new locative cases in Old Lithuanian, still preserved in some archaic dialects, e.g. Mathiassen 1996: 38; Kulikov 2009: 443f., 456). The expansion of the nominative type must be due to German influence (as hesitantly suggested in a footnote, p. 196).

Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson ("Verb classes and dative objects in Insular Scandinavian") demonstrates the neat correlation between semantic classes of verbs, convincingly arguing that the tendency to replace dative with accusative is, quite in accordance with our expectations, particularly strong for objects which are closer to the patient prototype. This tendency is especially clear in Faroese, in contrast with more conservative Icelandic.

Daniela Caluianu ("Transitive adjectives in Japanese") concentrates on the competition between two syntactic constructions attested with a small class of two-argument Japanese adjectives, such as *suki(da)* "like" or *kirai(da)* "dislike". She establishes the main syntactic, lexical and pragmatic factors responsible for the spread of the nominative-accusative construction (especially in informal style — for instance, in internet texts), alongside the standard binominative pattern — in particular, (i) the split of the original adjective–verb paradigm into two paradigms, centering on adjectival or verbal functions, and (ii) the association of the accusative pattern with the inchoative usages of the corresponding lexemes.

Part 4, "Case syncretism motivated by syntax, semantics or language contact", includes four papers concentrating on a classic and one of the oldest topics in historical linguistics, case syncretism.[3] Michael Noonan ("Patterns of development, patterns of syncretism of relational morphology in the Bodic languages") presents the impressive results of his study of patterns of case syncretism in 76 Tibeto-Burman (mostly Bodic) languages. These patterns are further related to the system of etymons (= relational markers) reconstructed for Proto-Tibeto-Burman. Along with well-known patterns such as {ERGATIVE, INSTRUMENTAL} or {DATIVE, LOCATIVE, ALLATIVE}, Noonan uncovers a number of less common patterns, such as {GENITIVE, ERGATIVE, INSTRUMENTAL}. Such patterns provide valuable typological evidence for diachronic linguistics; thus, the set {GEN, ERG, INS} related to the etymon *ki, which "centers on genitive, with ergative and instrumental constituting the main non-core uses" (p. 267), may indirectly corroborate the hypothesis on the original ergative function of the early Proto-Indo-European case morpheme *-s (later evolving into the nominative) and its historical connection with the genitive marker *-(o)s; see for instance, van Wijk (1902), Pedersen (1907: 152).[4]

The three other articles in this section deal with case syncretism in Indo-European languages. Silvia Luraghi ("The evolution of local cases and their grammatical equivalent in Greek and Latin") discusses the evolution of cases expressing

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3. The definition of syncretism given by Barðdal and Chelliah in the Introduction ("Examples of case syncretism are those where case markers indicate more than one grammatical or local relation or where case markers have varied functions", p. xiv) as well as by some authors (cf., for instance, Noonan's definition: "The term *syncretism* is used here to refer to a situation where a given relational marker is used to mark more than one relational function", p. 264) is synchronically-oriented, being, to some extent, at odds with the tradition. More commonly, this term refers to a partial or complete merger of two (or more) originally distinct cases resulting from a diachronic process; cf., for instance, Clackson's (2007: 91) formulation: "The standard grammatical term for the merger of two nominal categories into one is *syncretism*". This diachronic use of the term is adopted, for instance, in Luraghi's paper.

4. The genitive-ergative syncretism seems to be not uncommon in this area: it is also attested, for instance, in Burushaski and in the Indo-Aryan language Domaki.

spatial relations (location, direction, and source), focusing on patterns of syncretism attested in this domain in Greek and Latin. Elucidating the mechanisms of the merger of cases in these two languages, the author offers a convincing explanation of the less conservative character of the Latin case system, as compared to the more conservative Classical Greek, in terms of the dissociation of cases with spatial semantic roles, due to the increasing role of prepositions in the expression of spatial relations.

Michela Cennamo ("Argument structure and alignment variations and changes in Late Latin") investigates the correlation between two dramatic changes in the syntactic development from Late Latin to early Romance languages: the emergence of the neutral alignment, with the accusative able to encode all core arguments (though existing parallel with the elements of the nominative-accusative and active-inactive alignment), and the temporary loss of the category of voice. As Cennamo explains, "the loss of the voice dimension, in particular the lack of clear-cut distinctions in Late Latin between the active and the medio-passive voice, that is, the -R form, might have been the channel along which the accusative spreads from impersonal to personal constructions (passives-anticausatives, intransitives and later transitives)" (pp. 334–335). She further considers these diachronic phenomena as resulting from a more general tendency operating in Late Latin, the shift from the dependent-marking to head-marking type, thus uncovering a convincing structural motivation of a series of crucial changes in the syntactic type.

Hans C. Boas ("Case loss in Texas German: The influence of semantic and pragmatic factors") argues that the main reasons for the loss of the dative (replaced by the accusative) in German dialects spoken in Texas are internal rather than external (English influence) in nature. These include "similarity in phonological form, movement towards unmarked forms (from lexical to structural case), and similarity in semantic contexts" (p. 369).

Part 5, "Case splits motivated by pragmatics, metonymy and subjectification", includes two papers concentrating on factors which have only recently become the subject of diachronic research. Shobhana L. Chelliah ("Semantic role to new information in Meithei") discusses data from a Tibeto-Burman language, Meithei, presenting a coherent analysis of the functional shift of markers of semantic roles becoming markers of new information, as in cases where a patient marker extends to adversative, i.e., the participant is "deemed by the speaker as surprising and unfortunate" (p. 381), or a locative morpheme develops the meaning 'contrary to expectation'. Chelliah characterizes the process underlying this shift as 'metonymy'. This approach makes it possible to account for the polyfunctionality of semantic role markers, which are also commonly associated with some pragmatic functions in many Tibeto-Burman languages.

Misumi Sadler ("From less personal to more personal: Subjectification of *ni-*marked NPs in Japanese discourse") investigates the evolution of the postpositional particle from the Old Japanese texts (around 600) onwards, qualifying this process as "the semantic and pragmatic enrichment of *ni*-marked NP_1s from the most basic and concrete meaning/usage to its more expressive, more personal, more subjective, more discourse-based, and more writer-oriented usage" (p. 416). The history of this marker is thus evaluated as an example of subjectification — that is, a drift towards the increase of pragmatic functions, next to syntactic functions, such as encoding recipients, location, etc.

The book concludes with author and subject indices. Apart from a few minor flaws in bibliography and references,[5] the book is carefully edited, presenting a meticulous work of both editors and individual contributors.

The volume under review offers a good collection of high quality articles and will be useful reading for all those interested in general and historical linguistics and linguistic typology.

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5. Thus, on p. 367 we read three times "Kutova" (instead of "Kuteva"). On p. xx read "*in den neuiranischen Sprachen*" for "*in der neuiranischen Sprachen*"; "Hoop, H. de & Swart, P. de. (**Eds.**) 2008. *Differential Subject Marking*" for "Hoop, H. de & Swart, P. de. 2008. *Differential Subject Marking*"; "**S**chütze" for "Shütze".

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